

Bear's story by Ellisa Cordukes

This is the story of my beautiful Bear also known as my hairy son. It all started in March 2011, when I first saw the litter of 11 Groodle/Labrador puppies. I found my little baby bear on the first visit and continued to see him as often as I could over the next 12 weeks.

Bear looked and acted like little bear cub as a puppy – loving, fun and snuggly – however, there was more destruction than myself or my unsuspecting husband could have even imagine. Let's just say that my hairy son was nearly sent to boarding school several times over the first 18 months.

The arrival of our Bear coincided with me beginning my full time teaching degree so much of my time was spent at my computer with him by my side or me playing with the newest member of our family. We developed an extremely close bond over the four years, so much so that I called him my shadow as he would never be more than a couple of meters away.

Bear loves to talk and will come in each morning and say hello his mum, dad and sisters. He will put his paw on the bed say 'Heeelloooo' very clearly. Bear will often say hello to most people that visit but he especially loves his Grandma, Papa and Aunty Rhi. I feel like I am the luckiest person in the world to have such a talented boy.

At the end of 2014 I finished my teaching degree and began full time work. It was really hard to leave my boy at home alone after spending so many hours by his side. I felt like the worst mother in the world and missed him more than anything.

My world turned upside down in April 2015 when Bear had a growth removed from his jaw. It was diagnosed as an aggressive type of cancer. We were given a bleak prognosis, if we did not send him off to Brisbane for an extremely expensive surgery and chemotherapy we would lose him very soon. I could not fathom losing my boy but did not have the money to send him away for such an invasive surgery. Life became very dark and sad for me and all of us as we were all waiting for the worst case scenario.

I was so lost and devastated at the thought of losing my hairy son. I needed help. I did not realise that my mood and feelings of hopelessness was playing such a negative role in him healing. Because of our connection and close bond, I was causing him to feel depressed and this was not helping to want him to keep going.

From that day on, I had a new sense of purpose – to heal my hairy son with love and positive thoughts. He would never again feel my pain or that I had given up. At times this has been really hard, as I am so acutely aware of every minor change in my Bear's health. It is now November and I thank god for every day that I have with my hairy son.

